

# THANK YOU!

**Thank you for attending the safety meeting on the topic of MATERIALS HANDLING.  
As a reminder, here is the material we covered.**

## What's up, dock?

The space between a loading dock and a truck trailer is one of the most dangerous in any plant.

Usually about six inches (15.24 centimeters) wide, this space has been the scene of many fatal accidents. Forklifts cross from the dock into the trailer over an adjustable steel bridge called a dock leveler. If the trailer moves away from the dock, the forklift can tumble to the ground, crushing the driver.

The trucks can move forward for a number of reasons. They can slide on ice, snow or mud built up around the dock, or on hot asphalt. The brakes can fail. Perhaps the brakes were not set or the wheels were not chocked to prevent movement. Or the driver can make a mistake and pull away from the loading dock before the forklift is clear.

Trailer creep is the term describing slight movement of a truck trailer away from the dock. Premature departure is the term to describe leaving the dock too soon, possibly as a result of wrong or misunderstood directions. In fact, driver impatience because of delivery schedules has been shown to be a significant factor in more than a few loading dock accidents.

So the presence of a dock leveler is no guarantee of a safe surface for a forklift. A better system involves a vehicle restraint to secure trailers and reduce the chances of premature separation from the loading dock.

If you work around a loading dock as a driver, forklift operator or with other responsibilities, make sure you understand the hazards and how to protect yourself and others. Forklift accidents are likely to result in death or serious injury to operators and pedestrians. Lifting and carrying materials can cause disabling back injuries. Falls caused by slippery dock surfaces or unguarded edges can be serious as well.

### Consider these dock safety tips:

- As a driver, you need to observe and obey signals whether they originate from dockworkers or from automatic lights telling you when to back in or go forward. Co-operate with the vehicle restraint procedures in force at the dock. You also need to stick to pedestrian lanes when you leave your truck, and to stay in the driver waiting area as instructed.
- As a dockworker, you have to know how to safely restrain a trailer, using but not relying on automatic

signaling. Use a dock leveler correctly and never tamper with the safety stop device intended to prevent free-fall. If using chocks, place them yourself instead of leaving this job to the driver. Chocks should be chained to the dock. Inspect and maintain dock equipment regularly.

- Dockworkers should use materials handling equipment to avoid back injury. Only trained and authorized persons should operate forklifts. Beware of pinchpoint and entanglement hazards around dock conveyors.
- Maintain good lighting and keep surfaces free of grease, mud, snow or ice to prevent falls. Always use the steps and the handrail to exit the dock. Do not jump to the ground from a dock or trailer.
- As a forklift operator, wear your seat belt. Many forklift drivers have been crushed to death when they felt the forklift starting to fall and tried to jump free.

*Work happens quickly around a loading dock, as shipments arrive and are handled on tight schedules. No matter how fast things move for shipping deadlines, you should always make time for safety.*



## Materials Handling

Safety | **Smart!**